

Guilford County Animal Services

Foster Puppy Packet



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4525 W. Wendover Ave. Greensboro, NC 27409

Table of Contents

Welcome and Introduction	3
Important Procedures for Foster Parents	3
Foster Supplies	4
How to Care for a Mother and Puppies	4
The Setup	4
Introducing to the Home	5
Playtime	5
How to Feed Puppies at Different Ages	5
Orphaned Bottle Babies (Newborn- 4 weeks)	5
Newly weaned/Learning to wean puppies (4-5 weeks old)	6
Fully weaned puppies (5 weeks and older)	6
Stimulation	6
Keeping a Warm Environment	7
Keeping Your Foster Healthy	7
Fleas	8
Kennel Cough	8
Intestinal Parasites	9
Diarrhea and Dehydration	9
Hypoglycemia	9
Parvovirus	10
Other Issues	10
Behavior	10
Crate Training	10
Housetraining and Cleanliness	11
Attention and Playtime	12
Behavior Issues	12
Showcasing Your Foster	13
Adoption	13
Important Contacts	15



4525 W. Wendover Ave. Greensboro, NC 27409

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the Guilford County Animal Services Foster Program! Our mission at Guilford County Animal Services (GCAS) is to help our county be a safe, compassionate, and healthy place for people and animals. We work to control the loose animal population, as well as increase the positive outcomes for homeless animals in the county. GCAS is the only open admission shelter in Guilford County. As we expand our life-saving programs, working collaboratively is more crucial than ever, both in the shelter and outside of our front doors.

Important Procedures for Foster Parents

The Foster Coordinator can be reached Tuesday-Saturday from 8 AM to 5 PM. Please contact the front desk at (336) 641-3401 on Sundays and Mondays from 8 AM to 5 PM. If an emergency arises after hours, please contact Happy Tails Emergency Veterinary Clinic or Carolina Veterinary Specialists. If you have a concern about a nonurgent issue after hours, please contact the appropriate number at 8 AM the following day. If an emergency should arise during our regular business hours, please call the foster coordinator during designated hours or the front desk.

Happy Tails Emergency Veterinary Clinic: (336) 288-2688

2936 Battleground Ave | Greensboro, NC 27408

Carolina Veterinary Specialists (336) 632-0605

501 Nicholas Rd | Greensboro, NC 27409

If you need to go Happy Tails or Carolina Veterinary Specialists, please bring your foster paperwork with you and tell the staff you are a foster family for GCAS. GCAS will cover all medical expenses if an emergency occurs. Once an animal is taken to an emergency clinic, staff will notify you if the animal is stable after examination and can return home.



4525 W. Wendover Ave. Greensboro, NC 27409

Foster Supplies

GCAS will provide the following:

- A carrier for transport
- Puppy or Dog food (both canned and dry, depending on age)
- Puppy formula/ milk replacement (Esbilac)
- Syringes or bottles for young bottle-feeding puppies
- Veterinary care
- Donated foster supplies as they come in

You will provide:

- Fresh water
- Warming devices that do not automatically shut off, Snuggle Safe discs recommended (for very young puppies without mom or single puppies)
- Non-plastic food/water bowls that can be easily sanitized
- A separate area to keep the foster puppies away from other pets
- Toys
- Bedding, such as dog beds, towels, or blankets
- Puppy training pads and a baby gate for older puppies or adults

How to Care for a Mother and Puppies

Fostering mothers with puppies can be very different from fostering orphaned puppies. The mother will do most of the work for you! Your job is to provide a calm environment where mom and puppies feel safe and secure. It is VERY important that these families are kept in a separate room without interference from family pets – another animal just sniffing through the door can be extremely stressful for a mother who is trying to protect her babies.

The Setup

A large pen, crate or small room can provide the perfect place for a mom to keep her babies. The bottom of a crate with plenty of bedding makes a great nesting box. Food (wet and dry) should always be available for the mother. The puppies will be nursing from the mother until starting the weaning process at 4-5 weeks old. Refer to the [“How to Feed Puppies at Different Ages”](#) section for additional information about feeding. Fresh water should be provided for the mother in an area inaccessible to the puppies until they are at least 4 to 5 weeks old to prevent them from falling into the bowl and drowning.



4525 W. Wendover Ave. Greensboro, NC 27409

Introducing to the Home

Initially, the mother should be left alone with her babies for the first day or two. Once she is settled in you can spend increasing amounts of time in the room but let her seek attention from you on her own terms. Do not approach a mom as she may become protective of her puppies.

Playtime

As the mother becomes more comfortable and the puppies get older, make sure to spend time with mom separately from the babies – even mom doggies like to play! Have a place where mom can get away from her babies if she needs a break.

How to Feed Puppies at Different Ages

Always wash your hands before and after handling the puppies! Make sure that food/water bowls are cleaned daily.

We ask that you weigh your pup(s) each day at the same time to keep track of any gains or losses. Ideally, puppies should gain between 10-15% of his birth weight each day. But a simple rule of thumb is to expect your pup to gain about 5 ounces per week for small breeds and 2.5 pounds a week for large breeds. If your puppy is not eating for 24 hours or is losing weight, please contact our foster team immediately.

- *Orphaned Bottle Babies (Newborn- 4 weeks)*
 - Clean the bottles by washing in warm soapy water and rinsing in hot water. Prepare formula as directed on package. Cut a small hole in the nipple. When turned upside down, the formula should barely drip out of the nipple. The formula should be body-temperature warm; test the temperature on the inside of your wrist before feeding. Make sure the puppy is lying on its stomach in a natural position to feed. **Do not hold puppies on their backs like human babies or squeeze the bottle while feeding—this can cause them to aspirate the milk, choke and/or catch pneumonia.** You may have to give the puppy a couple of minutes to get used to the nipple or syringe. Hold the bottle at a 45-degree angle to prevent air from entering the puppy's stomach. If you see formula come out of the puppy's nose, stop feeding immediately and let the puppy clear the



4525 W. Wendover Ave. Greensboro, NC 27409

formula. If you hear crackling sounds when the puppy breathes, or believe it may have aspirated formula, contact the foster coordinator immediately. **Do not feed milk not specified for puppies, nor overfeed. This will cause medical issues!** Feed every 2-3 hours during the day, but do not wake them if they are sleeping for feeding time.

- *Newly weaned/Learning to wean puppies (4-5 weeks old)*
 - When first starting to wean puppies off the bottle, add canned puppy food to the bottle formula and blend well to prevent clogging the nipple. If they are not yet interested in whole canned food on a plate, they should be offered “puppy slurry”. This consists of warm water, puppy milk replacement, and canned puppy food that is stirred into a soup consistency. You can adjust the ingredients as needed to make sure they are eating. If they are not eating entire meals of the slurry, supplementing with the bottle is necessary to ensure the puppies are eating full meals. Once the puppies have teeth, care should be taken to ensure they do not bite or chew on nipple. Swallowing any small piece is a choking hazard and could put them at risk for intestinal blockage. Over several days decrease the amount of water and formula until they are eating just the canned food. They will be messy eaters so please keep them clean by wiping them with a warm wet cloth. Puppies that have just been weaned will need to be offered fresh canned puppy food 3 times a day. Fresh water should always be available.
- *Fully weaned puppies (5 weeks and older)*
 - At 6 weeks old they should be offered dry puppy food with the canned food. You can help their interest in this by mixing some canned with dry, then slowly decrease the amount of canned food you add. Fresh water should always be available.

Stimulation

A newborn puppy cannot evacuate its bowel or bladder on its own. After feeding, gently massage and stimulate ano-genital area with a sterile cotton ball or clean cloth dipped in warm water. You will need to do this until the puppy begins to use the bathroom on its own. They may not have a bowel movement EVERY feeding, and may even skip a day, so don't worry unless there are other signs of concern.



4525 W. Wendover Ave. Greensboro, NC 27409

By 4 weeks of age you can make a bathroom area for the puppies by placing newspaper or puppy pads in a corner of the room. Always praise the puppy when they use the paper. Be prepared to clean up after your foster puppies frequently. It is best not to take the foster puppies outside to use the bathroom at this age due to the risk of acquiring or spreading disease such as parvo. Most puppies will not begin to potty train until about the age of 8 weeks.

Keeping a Warm Environment

The area where you keep the puppies should be warm, dry, and clean with fresh blankets. A warming device should ALWAYS be on the lowest setting. Anything higher may overheat the puppies or severely burn them. Wrap both the electrical cord (if applicable) and warming device with a towel. They should NEVER be placed directly on a warming device as this could cause severe burns. Check to see if your warming device automatically shuts off or stays on 24/7. Please exercise extreme caution when using a device that does not shut off. If it does shut off, you must be vigilant in rewarming the device on a consistent schedule. We recommend microwaveable SnuggleSafe discs as a safe option. Follow the warming instructions on the disc packaging. The puppies should have room to move off the warming device if they become too hot. The first 2 weeks are especially critical to keeping the puppies warm. Puppies with mothers should not need a warming device unless the mother is not attentive to them.

- Nestbox Temperature
 - Newborn-1 week old- 85-90 F
 - 1-2 weeks old- 80-85 F
 - 2-3 weeks old-75-80 F
 - 3 weeks and older- 70-75 F

Keeping Your Foster Healthy

Clean the room/area thoroughly every day or as needed. Clean soiled areas and wash all bedding and toys with bleach. **Wear gloves and wash your hands to prevent spread of disease!**



4525 W. Wendover Ave. Greensboro, NC 27409

Your foster dog may not display any signs of illness until quite ill. Therefore, it's up to you to observe your dog closely each day.

For dogs under 12 weeks of age, symptoms of an emergency may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhea that lasts for more than a day • Vomiting and diarrhea for more than 6 hours • Vomiting more than once in an hour • Not eating for more than 12-24 hours • Lethargy without fever for more than 12 hours • Lethargy with a fever (Rectal temperature greater than 102.5 F)
For a dog older than 12 weeks of age, symptoms of an emergency may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhea that lasts for more than 1-2 days • Diarrhea and vomiting for more than a day • Vomiting more than 2-3 times in an hour • Not eating for more than 24 hours • Lethargy without fever for more than a day • Lethargy with fever (Rectal temperature greater than 102.5 F)

Fleas

Most foster dogs have been treated when arriving at the shelter, but additional flea treatments are available if needed. Puppies over 8 weeks of age and adult dogs can be treated with topical flea treatment. Puppies under 8 weeks can be bathed with dawn ship soap to kill fleas. Regular flea combing is the best way to control and monitor the fleas. Vacuum all areas of your house that your foster uses at least every two to three days. To check for fleas, inspect your dog daily, especially around the tail and back area, belly, and chin. Look also for black specks of flea dirt, which is digested blood. If fleas are present, treat as soon as possible. Change bedding and vacuum the floors daily. The washing machine will remove fleas, eggs and dirt.

Kennel Cough

Kennel cough is a contagious infection of the upper respiratory tract that usually manifests as a dry, hacking cough. There may be some discharge from the nose and a clear liquid that is



4525 W. Wendover Ave. Greensboro, NC 27409

coughed up. It's generally a mild, self-limiting illness of the trachea and bronchi encountered in all age groups of dogs, but especially in those under unusual stress.

If you have a dog at home and plan to foster a dog with kennel cough, it is highly recommended that your dog is up to date on all vaccines. Even with these vaccines, there is still a possibility of your dog getting kennel cough, so it is best that your dog does not interact with your foster dog.

Intestinal Parasites

Puppies need to be dewormed starting at 2 weeks of age and repeated every 2 weeks until able to take monthly preventative. This will be scheduled through the shelter. After worming, it is normal to see worms pass in the stool. If you see white, rice-like segments, please notify the foster coordinator, as they most likely have tapeworms and will need a different type of dewormer. For more information regarding parasites, visit <https://capcvet.org/guidelines/>.

Hypoglycemia

A puppy with hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) will lack energy. Puppies need glucose to function normally, as it is the fuel the body burns for energy. Common signs of hypoglycemia include sluggish behavior and/or no interest in moving or eating and lethargy. In severe instances, puppies may have seizures, since glucose is necessary for the brain tissue and muscles to function. These hypoglycemic episodes will cause puppies to fall over and appear weak or comatose. Hypoglycemia is an emergency; therefore, you will need to contact the foster coordinator and bring them to see a vet immediately or take them to an emergency vet if it's after hours. You may rub Karo Syrup on their gums or honey while you are on the way to see a vet to boost their glucose level.

Diarrhea and Dehydration

Diarrhea can be caused by several factors, including stress, change of diet, poor diet, eating garbage, parasites and viruses. If your foster dog has diarrhea but no other symptoms, you can feed a bland diet of white rice and plain, unseasoned, boiled chicken breast for a few days, then gradually switch back to their regular food. Provide plenty of fresh water, as diarrhea can cause dehydration. To check for dehydration, pull the skin up over the shoulder blades. If it slides back quickly, the dog is not dehydrated. If the skin goes down slowly, or does not lie flat again, then the dog is dehydrated and needs fluids. You can also examine the dog's gums. If they are



4525 W. Wendover Ave. Greensboro, NC 27409

dry and tacky (instead of moist) this could indicate dehydration. Call the foster coordinator immediately if you suspect your foster is dehydrated.

Parvovirus

Call us immediately if you see bloody diarrhea, vomiting or lethargy. Parvovirus is contagious and potentially fatal if not treated. Therefore, puppies need to be kept in a room that can be cleaned easily with bleach. (If you do not, and puppies test positive, then you will not be able to safely bring another animal into your home for several months.)

Other issues such as:

- Unusual discharge from the eyes, nose or other body openings
- Abnormal lumps
- Limping
- Difficulty getting up or down
- Loss of appetite
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Other abnormal symptoms

Behavior

Crate Training

Crates provide safe havens and dens for dogs. They calm them and can help prevent destructive chewing, barking and house-training mistakes. Puppies should not be crated for more hours than they are months old, plus one. For example, a 4-month-old pup should not be crated longer than 5 hours.

How long an adult dog can be crated will depend on many factors. For example, if your foster dog was left outside, he has never been required to hold it for any period. It will take time for this dog to learn to hold it, and you will need to start slowly. Older dogs and dogs with some medical conditions may only be able to successfully hold it for short periods of time. Rigorous exercise should be given before and after any long periods in the crate and giving them a couple of chew toys will help alleviate boredom. You may want to crate your new foster dog for



4525 W. Wendover Ave. Greensboro, NC 27409

the first few nights in your bedroom – most of them feel more secure in their crate and it protects your house from accidents.

Crates should never be used as a means of punishment; they're not to be used for keeping puppies under 6 months out of mischief all day either. Crates should be thought of as dog playrooms, just like child playrooms with games and toys. It should be a place dogs like to be and feel safe and secure.

Housetraining and Cleanliness

Be patient with your foster dog. Even house-trained adult dogs will make mistakes, especially if they've been at the shelter for a long time and have been eliminating in their kennel. Clean the area where your foster animals are at daily. Change puppy pads, clean walls and floors near the pads, and wash all bedding and toys with bleach. If there are smells in your house from another dog or cat, some foster dogs may "mark" their territory. This action should be redirected immediately with a calm "Oops" – then escort him outside where he can finish. You will then want to use some odor neutralizer (like Nature's Miracle) on the areas where the dog "marked" to ensure he will not smell and mark that area again.

You can begin to housetrain a puppy at 8 weeks of age. Even if you bring home an adult dog who is housebroken, you will want to follow these guidelines until your foster dog adjusts to his new situation and to your schedule.

Determine where you want your foster dog to eliminate – it could be the backyard, side yard or an indoor spot such as a Pup Head, litter system or one you have designed. Then take him there every time with a spoken command (such as "do your business"). Take him out when he wakes up, after he eats or drinks, after a play session, or at least every 2 hours. Puppies should go out every 45 minutes until you learn their pattern.

Stand with him for 5 minutes. If he eliminates, reward him (with treats, praise, a favorite game and your own special happy dance). If he doesn't go in 5 minutes, take him back inside and try every 15 minutes until he goes. Every time he goes, make sure you reward him!

Supervise the puppy closely while you're inside. If he starts to sniff the floor, or even squats to go, interrupt with a calm "Oops," scoop him up quickly and take him to the approved spot and



4525 W. Wendover Ave. Greensboro, NC 27409

praise him when he finishes. If he eliminates in the house while you're not paying attention, don't correct him – it's not his fault. Clean it up and go back to your schedule. Use an odor neutralizer to get rid of the smell. Never put the dog's face in his mess or yell at him; he won't understand you, and you will only be teaching him fear.

Attention & Playtime

Gentle and calming human contact is important for dogs. Human handling is especially important for the healthy development of puppies. Be sure to give your foster dog several minutes of playtime periodically through the day.

Do not allow children to behave with the foster dog in a manner you would not want the child to behave with a younger sibling. Teach children to leave a dog alone when he is eating, chewing and sleeping. Never allow a child to remove a toy or any other prized possession from a dog.

Do not play tug of war or wrestle with your foster dog. If you have a shy or fearful dog, do not throw a toy toward the dog, because he may think you are throwing things at him and become more fearful. After you have finished playing with a toy, put it away so that you are controlling the toy and the playtime.

Behavior Issues

Many of the behaviors that we find problematic – such as barking, whining, digging, chewing, scavenging and hunting other animals – are really just normal dog behaviors and can be explained as “dogs being dogs.” The easiest way to coexist with our canine companions is to provide more appropriate outlets for these behaviors.

If your foster dog is exhibiting any behavioral issues, ask yourself the questions below:

- Is my foster dog getting enough exercise?
- Is he being left alone for long periods of time?
- Does he have interesting toys to keep his mind engaged and stimulated?
- Is he getting enough attention and playtime?
- Am I reinforcing bad behavior? Some examples include verbally scolding a dog when he is seeking attention or engaging the dog when he uses bad manners to get you to play.



4525 W. Wendover Ave. Greensboro, NC 27409

- Does my foster dog have a safe place that is dog-proofed with appropriate chew toys, or am I leaving my own belongings within reach?
- Am I providing specific outlets based on his natural instincts and drives?

We don't expect foster parents to be miracle workers. If your foster dog requires more attention, exercise or training than you can provide, talk to your Coordinator – another foster home might be best for both you and the dog. Regardless of the issue, we don't condone punishment, which will not address the cause of the behavior and in fact it may worsen behavior that's motivated by fear or anxiety.

Punishment may also cause anxiety in dogs who aren't currently fearful. People often believe their dog makes the connection to discipline because he runs and hides or "looks guilty." But dogs display submissive postures like cowering, running away or hiding when they feel threatened by an angry tone of voice, body posture, or facial expression. Your dog doesn't know what he's done wrong; he only knows that you're upset. Punishment after the fact will not only fail to eliminate the undesirable behavior, but may provoke other undesirable behaviors, too.

Showcasing Your Foster

A "Foster Biography" for each animal is a great way to help potential adopters learn about a pet's likes, dislikes, and personality! Send the foster coordinator cute photos that highlight their appearance and personality as well.

If the dog has some bad habits, this can be discussed over the phone with any potential adopters. The web story should generate interest, not turn people away. We don't want to mislead people; however, we really try to focus on the positive. Please email the story to the foster coordinator!

Adoptions

Your puppies **MUST** be 8 weeks or older and weigh at least 2 pounds (so they can be spayed or neutered) to be qualified for the adoption floor. When your foster is ready for adoption,



4525 W. Wendover Ave. Greensboro, NC 27409

friends, co-workers and relatives may want to adopt. We encourage you find potential adopters for your foster and notify the foster coordinator when you do. Generally, foster families will be the first to be eligible to adopt any foster animal. If you want to adopt your foster this must be made clear to the foster coordinator before the animal is marketed to others for adoption.

We may also have you contact and set up meet and greets with potential adopters that contact us directly about your foster. If they decide to adopt, you can schedule a time to meet here, where they can fill out the paperwork, pay the fees, and adopt the animal. They must have the animal ID number in order to complete the adoption. If you are unsure of the animal ID, contact the foster coordinator. If there are no potential adopters, fosters need to come back to the shelter for our adoption floor when they are 8 weeks old. Please contact the foster coordinator to set up an appointment to bring them.



4525 W. Wendover Ave. Greensboro, NC 27409

Important Contacts

Guilford County Animal Shelter

(336) 641-3401

4525 West Wendover Ave

Greensboro, NC 27409

Foster Coordinator

Kendelle Federico

(336) 266-4138

(Available Tuesday- Saturday 8-5 PM)

kfederico@guilfordcountync.gov

Happy Tails Emergency Veterinary Clinic

(336) 288-2688

2936 Battleground Ave

Greensboro, NC 27408

Carolina Veterinary Specialists

(336) 632-0605

501 Nicholas Rd

Greensboro, NC 27409

For Animal Control emergencies, questions or comments, call (336) 641-5990.

If you need to return your foster pet due to an emergency that is after-hours, you may first attempt to contact the foster coordinator. If you are unable to reach the foster coordinator and the situation is urgent, please contact Animal Control Dispatch (336-641-5990). If Dispatch is unavailable, you can try calling Metro 911 non-emergency number (336-373-2222). For true emergencies, call 911.

**Visit our Trello Board for Additional Puppy and Mother/Litter Resources and How-To Videos
and to get in touch with Canine Foster Mentors**

<https://trello.com/b/jkXzH3aR>